(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Suspended cop sees Senior Role in Smuggling" appearing in 'The Hindustan Times' dated June 25, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported thereon;

(c) whether the Government have conducted or propose to conduct an enquiry into the allegations made in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) An inquiry conducted into the matter by Delhi Police revealed that the Constable concerned had been placed under suspension on the grounds of misbehaviour and not complying with lawful orders of his superiors. The allegation made by him that senior police officers were involved in smuggling activities at the Airport was also found to be false as he failed to appear before the inquiry despite six summons having been issued to him.

Method for Assessment of Tiger Population

1114. SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the method adopted by the Government to assess the tiger population is faulty and incorrect; and

(b) if so, the new method proposed for a correct assessment?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) and (b) No Sir. The pug mark technique adopted by different States is scientifically accepted, which is easy to implement in the field. However due to variation in soil types and moisture content of soil, the authenticity of pug mark method of enumeration have been questioned. New methods have been developed in different parts. The Ministry of Environment and Forests constituted a Committee of experts to suggest improvement in the methodology of enumeration. The recommendation of the Committee may be seen in the attached statement which have been circulated to all tiger states for implementation.

Statement

Recommendations for an Alternative Approach to the Estimation of Tiger and Prey Populations

Research on population estimation techniques applicable to large mammals have now conclusively established the fact that approaches based on the concept of 'sampling' are more rigorous, reliable, replicable, and cost efficient compared to the earlier approaches based on total counts. Additionally sampling based approaches also permit the use of theoretically well established estimators/models such as line transects, point transects, and capture-recapture etc. Further, the availability of powerful new computer applications has brought these complex analyses within reach of any computer literate person. We are, therefore, recommending that the total count based "census" of tigers and prey species being carried out now should be modified, and supplemented by the following population assessment and estimation methodologies:

1. Mapping tiger distribution: This should be done once a year, during the season appropriate for that region. This should be done by the existing staff of the forest department. The aim is to specifically (and only) record tracks seen and their location on a map at 1 : 50000 scale. There is no need for using glass tracers etc., if reasonable integrity of data collection can be assured. If signs of cubs (reproducing populations) are seen this should be additionally noted and recorded. The park authorities should not be asked to come up with exact numbers of either tigers or prey.

2. In designated project tiger areas (to be expanded to other areas later) continuous monitoring and recording the presence/absence of tigers, with a special emphasis on the presence of cubs.

3. Sampling based, site specific population estimation plan : Each important reserve/region should aim to have access to trained teams of staff, scientists, NGO volunteers, to carry out population estimation using sampling based method relevant for regular use in future (depending on local conditions and availability of skilled personnel resources).

For Tigers

3.1 Encounter rate index based on number of pug marks, scrapes and scats encountered per unit distance walked along predetermined sampling routes which will be replicated annually. This will generate a quantitative, objective index with a mean and variance.

3.2. If skilled personnel, resources and local conditions permit camera trapping on a capture-recapture model can be carried out.

For Prey Species (including livestock)

3.3 Pellet density estimate using plots along predetermined sampling routes which will be replicated annually. This will generate a quantitative, objective index with a mean and a variance.

3.4 Direct estimation of prey density or at least prey encounter rates using a system of properly laid out line transects. This will generate a density estimate with a mean and a variance.

The above recommendations should be introduced by modifying the "census" operations into a simpler tiger distribution mapping as described above.

Sd./-	Sd/-	Sd./
(DR. L.A.K. SINGH)	(SANJAY SINGH GAILOUT)	(VINOD RISHI)
Sd./-	Sd/-	
(DR. A.J.T. JOHNSINGH)	(BRIG. RANJIT TALWAR)	
Sd./-	Sd/-	
(DR. ULLAS KARANTH)	(P.K. SEN)	

Taj Mahal

1115. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Taj Mahal is in danger due to toxic fumes and smokes emanating from brick kilns;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ) : (a) to (c) There is no danger to the Taj Mahal from emissions of brick kilns as all brick kilns in 20 km radius of the Taj Mahal and other significant Monuments in the Taj Trapezium have been closed in compliance of an order dated 10th May, 1996 of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Homes for Mentally Retarded

1116. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the cities where homes for the mentally retarded are functioning at present, population-wise and State-wise;

(b) whether the Government have adopted criteria for opening such more homes for these disabled persons; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) The Central Government do not have homes for mentally retarded persons. However it gives grants-in-aid to Non-Governmental Organisations all over India for schools/Vocational Training Centres for mentally retarded. The details of such NGOs State-wise are given in the attached *Statement.*

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Statement

Sl.	State	Name of the Cities
1	2	3
1.	Andhra Pradesh	1. Hyderabad (10)
		2. Secunderabad (03)
		3. Karimnagar (01)
		4. Vishakhapatnam (01)
		5. Vijaywada (01)
		6. Chittor (01)
		7. Krishna (01)
		8. Kakinada (01)
		9. Khammam (01)
		10. Guntoor (01)
2.	Bihar	1. Patna (05)
		2. Gaya (02)
		3. Jehanabad (01)
3.	Delhi	11